

## DAVID DOUGLAS IN CALIFORNIA

WILLIS LINN JEPSON

David Douglas, the botanical explorer for the London Horticultural Society, arrived in California at Monterey on December 22, 1830, by sea from the Columbia River where he had been since October 11, the date of his arrival from England on his second journey in that region. Douglas remained in California until August, 1832, when he sailed for the Hawaiian Islands, thence taking a schooner to Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River in October.<sup>1</sup> He was the first botanical collector in California in residence for any extended period and during this time he traveled through the Coast Ranges from Monterey north to the Mission San Francisco de Solano (Sonoma) and south to the Mission of Santa Barbara. He was not only the first traveler to collect the extensively rich and varied spring flora of the Coast Ranges, nearly all the species of which were new to botanical science, but also the first to leave some written description of it. Hundreds of new species, our most familiar plants, were based on the Douglas collections, study of which is not exhausted even at this day. It would be a very great advantage in view of the taxonomic interest of the Douglas plants if the localities of collection were known. No information is, however, available for these specimens save the designation "California". Douglas, it is true, kept a field journal and numbered his specimens. The numbers are attached to the specimens in the Kew Herbarium, for example, but his journal was lost at the time of the shipwreck in the Fraser River,—a most disastrous loss. While most of his field work was plainly done in the Coast Range valleys, yet on account of the fact that he collected certain plants it would seem an inevitable inference that he penetrated eastward as far as the inner Coast Range. For example he collected *Thelypodium flavescens* Hook., which develops abundant colonies in the inner range but has never been found near Monterey. At Kew one of the collections of *Thelypodium flavescens* made by Douglas carries on the sheet a waif of another species, an extremely tiny plant of *Streptanthus hispidus* Gray, which, it is not likely, would have been gathered anywhere but in the inner South Coast Range country where it is a restricted endemic. It has been suggested that Douglas visited Mt. Diablo, but the form of *Calochortus pulchellus* which he obtained might have been collected in the Sonoma region. In a few rare cases the indication "Monterey" or "San Francisco" appears with an original description, but in no case on the original label.

At the most, little is definitely known of the detailed movements of Douglas in California. His stay here was, however, so productive and so important botanically that every item of information is interesting. For this reason there is here reproduced a transcript of an unpublished letter written by Douglas to William Edward Hartnell

<sup>1</sup> Bancroft, H. H., History of California, vol. 3, p. 403.  
MADROÑO, vol. 2, pp. 97-104, July 1, 1933.

at Monterey. The original, preserved in the Bancroft Library (Vallejo Documents, vol. 31, p. 49), is in places not readily decipherable but nevertheless gives an excellent idea of the roster of Douglas' friends in California.

To/ William Edward Hartnell Esq.  
Monterey

Noviembre 11, 1833

Fav. of  
A. B. Thompson

At my tent on the Hill  
of Yerba Buena<sup>2</sup>  
Novm 11, 1833.

My dear Sir:

Do inform Dna Teresa that she has at this moment a very humble servant in Saint Francisco who exceedingly regrets not having the pleasure of laying before her, in person, his kindest regards. He requests her to believe that the multitude of kindnesses she bestowed on him when under her roof, the recollection of which is not destroyed by the distance of time and place over which he has passed since he left Monterey, on the contrary, this remembrance of which is to him gratifying.

I have heard of the death of poor John Noriega of so much promise—Such is the wish of Providence and ought to tend to admonish us to submit with cheerfulness to His dispensations. That which is dearest to us is often that which is soonest taken away from us, and it is well it should so be.

I felicitate Dna Angustias<sup>3</sup> on the *changing* of her name. May the number of her days be equalled only by the abundance of comfort spiritual and temporal she may enjoy through life and that all may conduce to her happiness. Salute her spouse in my name and tell him I give him joy. When you see or write to St. Barbara fail not to present my Comp. to Dn Jose Noriega and his amiable wife.—Also to friend Robinson.

I can hardly express how pleased I should have been even only with a few hours conversation with you. I do not despair of that

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<sup>2</sup>“The Hill of Yerba Buena” was probably Telegraph Hill, then known as Loma Alta, which name was sometimes applied to the Cove of Yerba Buena. Douglas arrived in the “Dryad”, the “Columbia Vessel” of the text, which came in for water, supplies, and to refit. Chief Factor Finlayson was on board. Apparently while in port Douglas set up a tent ashore for his observations and collection activities. The landing was at Clark’s Point, about Broadway and Battery Streets, and presumably his tent was not far distant.

There was no settlement at Yerba Buena at this time. William Heath Davis in “Sixty Years in California” (pp. 10-11) gives a description of it in 1833.

The letter was sent by the hand of A. B. Thompson, then supercargo of the “Loriot”, for many years a resident of Santa Barbara.—ANSON S. BLAKE.

<sup>3</sup>Doña Angustias was the daughter of Don Jose Noriega, and “friend Robinson” was the man she married, Alfred Robinson, author of *Life in California* and for many years agent of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company in San Francisco. It is the account of this wedding that is given in *Dana’s Two Years Before the Mast* as occurring in Santa Barbara.—ANSON S. BLAKE.

gratification at no distant period—though not God willing before I see the “Land o’ Cakes”.

The Columbia vessel bound for the Sandwich Islands dropped in here a few days since for water and fresh provisions which after a tempestuous passage of 21 days has landed here nearly a wreck. The Governor of the Columbia, Mr. Finlayson, is on board. I was anxious to visit Monterey that you might have had this gentleman’s acquaintance. he will be there in Oct. 1834 and will have a letter or letters for you.

As to *self* I have little to tell you of—at least little that would in any wise interest you—for it is difficult to separate *self* and to be agreeable. I have been in the Snowy Mountains as high as the 60° over a dreary un hospitable country, where I suffered extreme hardship—from hunger, indeed nearly utter starvation. Intense cold in the mountains then scorching weathering heat—and to compleat my misfortunes I lost the *whole* of my collection at a dreadful cataract of a river<sup>4</sup> nearly as large as the Columbia in the mountains. The only articles saved were my *Instruments and astronomical Journal* not even a morsel of food of any kind, bedding etc. When I tell you that I was an hour and 40 minutes in the water in the rapids myself and after escaping had 300 miles over a barbarous country without food or shelter you will form an idea of my condition, I am thankful to God that no lives were lost though some from exhaustion suffered greatly while others could not endure the privation of the want of food.

It is probable I may make a short stay at Oyhee<sup>5</sup> for the purpose of examining the vulcano & Botanizing, surveying, &c. If you have time to spare to inform me on the following points you will confer on me a mark of your respect. 1st Your own health—family— 2nd Increase of family. Names of *the* or little strangers—Condition of farm. State of vineyard &c.

Address to the care of the British Consul.

If you ever should see or write to any of my old friends, the Fathers I entreat you to mention me to them—particularly Padre Narcisso<sup>6</sup> and Padre Pedro Cabot. —In the meantime as you will certainly see the Rev. P. Short<sup>7</sup> I ask you to give him my respects. I have been only once at the Mission where I had the pleasure of meeting Gen. Figueroa<sup>8</sup>. I am glad to have seen this gentleman for he appears much disposed to cherish industry, to stand by the virtuous and to do justly. I am also glad to hear him express himself so kindly towards you and the old gent. at Sta. Barbara.

Give my best complements to Dna Concepcion Arguello<sup>9</sup>—Captain

<sup>4</sup>Frazer River, British Columbia.

<sup>5</sup>Old spelling for Hawaii.

<sup>6</sup>Narcisso Duran.

<sup>7</sup>Patrick Short, an Irishman and an exile from Honolulu; cf. H. H. Bancroft, *History of California*, vol. 5, p. 719.

<sup>8</sup>Governor Figueroa, the name mis-spelled by Douglas.

<sup>9</sup>Heroine of California’s most famous romance; cf. Sir George Simpson, *An Overland Journey Round the World During the Years 1841 and 1842*, American edition, part 1, p. 206 (1847). See also Bret Harte’s Poem, *Doña Concepcion de Arguello*.

Zamorano, Dña Luisa, Mr. Spence—Captain Cooper—and on no account to forget Dn. Estevan Monras and all to whom I have the distinguished honor of being known to.

I pray you accept of my best wishes for your health happiness and prosperity, and believe me unalterably

Your attached servant  
and friend

D. Douglas

## NOTES ON THE INTRODUCED FLORA OF CALIFORNIA

IRA L. WIGGINS

Two plants not previously known from the state have been collected recently in San Diego County by Mr. L. W. Nuttall and Mr. W. V. Shear, County Agricultural Inspector, respectively. The presence of a species of *Vicia* not included in western botanical literature came to my attention in the summer of 1930 while teaching at the Humboldt State Teachers College at Arcata, and Mr. Nuttall's collection of *Lepidium draba* L. extends the previously known range of that species in California. This note is offered in order to establish a definite record of the occurrence of these species in the localities listed here.

*KYLLINGA BREVIFOLIA* Rottb. was collected in San Diego, on May 28, and again on July 21, 1932 by Mr. Nuttall. He sent the specimens to me for identification since the species was not listed in the literature available to him. In sending the second collection, after the smaller collection of the earlier date had been identified, he enclosed the following note: "*Kyllinga brevifolia* grows on the east side of a house on Arch Street. There is a small steep bank between the house and the pavement and a narrow strip of grass between pavement and curb; the plant is found in both places. The grass has been, and is now cut very short, but the little plants—2 inches high—bravely bloom. The sod is very dense, but apparently they are determined to conquer and finally take possession."

The genus *Kyllinga* contains about two hundred species, most of them confined to tropical regions, but two species in addition to the one listed above also occur in the southeastern part of the United States.

This sedge is a perennial plant with solitary oblong-ovoid spikes 5-8 mm. long subtended by three involucrel bracts, two of them spreading, the third erect and giving the spike the appearance of being lateral instead of terminal. The keels of the spikelets are serrulate-ciliate. The leaves are narrowly linear and grass-like, usually a little shorter than the scape. The plant spreads by horizontal rhizomes, and exceedingly numerous fibrous roots form a dense sod just below the surface of the soil.

*VICIA VILLOSA* Roth. is a well established escape in numerous localities from the Santa Cruz Peninsula northward into Washington. It is so abundant in the vicinity of Humboldt Bay that it competes